

PRAYER - Why Pray?
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U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, ch. 35 & 36, p. 461-481. Also
Appendix B: Traditional Catholic Prayers, p. 532.
New Catholic Answer Bible: H-1, H-4, J-2, O-1, R-2.

Books

Beckman, Jim, God Help Me, Servant, 2009.

Martin, James, The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything, Harper One, 2012.

USCCA Text Ch 35, p. 463 for definitions of prayer.
"Raising of one's mind and heart to God."

Stories in the Old Testament depict centuries of practice by Hebrew people
of communicating with God through prayer.

Text p. 465 - The OT book of Psalms were prayers composed for worship.

Prayer in New Testament

Mark 1: 35 (NT 74)early in the morning...

Luke 6: 12 (NT 110)he spent the night in prayer...

Matthew 6: 9-13 (NT 23) Our Father in heaven... (Text 483-490, Ch 36)

Luke 22: 39-46 (NT 137) Agony in the Garden before Jesus was arrested.

Luke 23: 34 (NT 139) from the cross

DISCUSS

Why would Jesus pray?

Why should we pray?

What is your definition of prayer? What does it look like in your life?

GODSPELL music.

...these things I pray:

To see thee more clearly,

Love thee more dearly,

Follow thee more nearly, day by day.

(St. Richard of Chichester, 1197-1253)

TO SEE THEE MORE CLEARLY

Our vision of God comes from what we learn, not only from books and classes, but from our experiences of life.

Know yourself.

Humility is the foundation of prayer. (CCC #2559)

Examination of conscience, where we look for aspects of ourselves that may separate us from God; things such as pride, self-sufficiency, indifference, poor conscience, lack of communication, and sin.

To see God more clearly we must see ourselves more clearly, evaluate our perceptions.

LOVE THEE MORE DEARLY

We've talked before about how gratitude is a prerequisite for love. You have to be grateful for someone before you can love them. Gratitude comes from paying attention to God in our lives. Prayer helps us to pay attention to God in our lives.

Communication is also an essential element of relationship. Prayer is a form of communicating with God; not just us telling him what we need, but also being quiet and listening with our hearts and minds as well as our ears.

FOLLOW THEE MORE NEARLY

Remember God is always inviting us into relationship through His grace.

Our response to that invitation is faith.

And because of our faith and relationship with God, we pray.

Prayer is a response, a result, of faith.

There is an old saying, "Lex orandi, lex credendi: The law of prayer is the law of faith, or more loosely translated, "What we pray is what we believe."

WHY PRAY?

Jeremiah 29: 11-14a (OT p.944)

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS for discussion next week.

1. What are obstacles in my prayer life?

2. Is personal prayer an option in a loving relationship with God? Explain.

3. What point has stands out with regard to prayer for me?